

Recruitment of Chair– Arts Council Wales

Vacancy summary:

The Arts Council of Wales was established by Royal Charter in 1994. The Arts Council funded largely by grant in aid from the Welsh Government. It is also a registered charity subject to Charity Law and is one of the four Lottery Distributors in Wales. The Council's aims as set out in its Royal Charter are:

- a) to develop and improve the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts;
- b) to increase the accessibility of the arts to the public in Wales;
- c) to advise and co-operate with the Welsh Government and relevant bodies; and
- d) to carry out the objects through the medium of both the English and Welsh languages.

The Chair is accountable to Welsh Government Minister(s) and may also be held to account by Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament. Communications between the Council and the Minister must, in the normal course of business, be conducted through the Chair. The Chair must ensure other Council members are kept informed of all such communications. The Chair is responsible for ensuring the Council's policies and actions support the Minister's wider strategic policies, and the Body's affairs are conducted with probity. Where appropriate, the Chair must make arrangements to communicate and disseminate these policies and actions throughout the Body.

Background:

As the country's funding and development agency for the arts, the Arts Council:

- supports and develops high quality arts activity – it invests public funding, provided by the taxpayer, and allocated by the Welsh Government, helping the arts to thrive in Wales
- develops and delivers the Welsh Government's strategic priorities for the arts – it ensures appropriate mechanisms, process and procedures are in place to deliver on the strategic agenda set by the Welsh Government, as set out in the prevailing strategy document (currently the Programme for Government) and the Annual Remit letter
- distributes Lottery funds – through applications to its funding programmes it invests in projects that develop new arts activity, supporting individuals and organisations
- provides advice about the arts – through its staff and its advisers, the Arts Council has the largest concentration of arts expertise and knowledge in Wales
- shares information – the Arts Council is the national centre of a network of information and intelligence about the arts in Wales. It also has strong international links in the UK and beyond

- raises the profile of the arts in Wales – the Arts Council is the national voice for the arts in Wales, making sure that people are aware of the quality, value and importance of the country's arts Arts Council of Wales
- generates more money for the arts economy – through initiatives such as *Collectorplan* – the Council's scheme to encourage more people to buy art - and its work to secure European funding; these bring more money into the arts economy
- influences planners and decision-makers – the arts take place in many different settings. They can have a dramatic impact on the quality of people's lives, and the places in which they live and work. The arts are also frequently at the heart of initiatives for economic and social regeneration, from transforming learning in schools and for promoting health and wellbeing. The Arts Council plays a key role in ensuring that the contribution that the arts can make is recognised, valued and celebrated.

Publicity summary:

The Welsh Government circulated details of the appointment through stakeholder lists held by the Public Bodies Unit (PBU); advertised the role in Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Stakeholder Bulletin; shared details of the recruitment with Welsh Government Outreach team to cascade amongst under-represented groups; and posted the vacancy on the Welsh Government public appointments website and the UK Cabinet Office website.

Publicity summary:

The vacancy was promoted by through the Arts Council's Social Media channels and website.

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The vacancy was promoted by the following Social Media channels and advertised through the media listed below:

- Safle Swyddi
- Golwg 360
- Diversity Jobsite Network
- Fish4jobs (JobsWales)
- Guardian
- Arts Professional
- Arts Jobs

Recruitment process summary:

Advertised on both Welsh Government and Cabinet Office website between 14 November 2022 and 3 January 2023. The closing date for receipt of applications was extended from 12 December 2022 to 3 January 2023 to generate a greater number of applications. There were no other changes made to the initial recruitment plan.

Sift – 19 January 2023

Stakeholder Session – 9 – 10 February 2023. The stakeholder session members included representatives from the Arts Council, stakeholders, and Welsh Government. The topic for discussion at the session was '*Reaching under-represented groups to widen engagement. With particular focus on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people and people from a lower socio-economic background.*'. Candidates were asked to prepare to share personal thoughts on this topic (maximum 10 minutes), and then facilitate the discussion.

Interviews – 14th February 2023

At interview, candidates were asked to provide a 10-minute presentation on the following:

What is your vision for the Arts Council of Wales following the Investment Review and what would success look like?

Assessment advisory panel membership:

Jason Thomas - Director of Arts, Culture, Sport and Tourism Welsh Government
Helgard Krause - Chief Executive, Books Council of Wales
Aaqil Ahmed – Senior Independent Panel Member

A total of 15 applications for the new role were received. Six candidates were recommended for interview although two withdrew their applications prior to the interviews taking place. The Assessment Advisory Panel considered there to be two appointable candidates.

Deputy Minister for Arts, Culture, Sport, Tourism & Chief Whip's preferred candidate – Margaret Russell

Conflict of Interest

On application, Margaret declared her husband, Dr. Aled Eirug, is chair of Coleg Cymraeg, the Welsh medium higher and further education body and her daughter, Holly Kalo, works as an administrator for the IRIS LGBTQ film festival.

The panel considered this declaration presented no conflict of interest.

Political Activity (as stated on the application form)

None